Everyone's House

Sydney Opera House
Strategy 2024 – 28



Acknowledgement of Country

The Sydney Opera House acknowledges the Gadigal of the Eora Nation, traditional custodians of Tubowgule, the land on which Australia's most iconic building and premier performing arts centre stands.

We honour the long Gadigal history of gathering and storytelling, and celebrate the strength and resilience of First Nations people and communities, past and present. The Opera House continues this legacy today by embracing and celebrating First Nations artistic expression and culture.

First Nations readers are advised that this document may contain the names and images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are now deceased.

2022 Vivid Sydney Lighting of the Sails, *Yarrkalpa – Hunting Ground, 2021*. Photo by Daniel Boud.



Sydney Symphony Orchestra, reopening performance in the renewed Concert Hall, July 2022. Photo by Daniel Boud.

Welcome

The idea that the Sydney Opera House was built to serve the community is at the heart of our ambition to be Everyone's House.

The Opera House is a living work of art, a place of possibility and wonder. For more than half a century, artists, audiences and visitors have been coming here to be uplifted, empowered and entertained. It is one of the world's busiest performing arts centres, the nation's premier tourism destination and a World Heritage masterpiece that belongs to the people of NSW.

With this strategy, we are building on strong foundations while continuing to evolve so that we can make the best possible use of this marvellous place, and ensure our people, operations and the building itself are resilient and ready for whatever comes next.

The Everyone's House strategy has four themes:

- We better understand and connect with the community.
- Everyone feels welcome here.
- We are future ready.
- We lead and inspire positive change.

Together, these themes provide a framework for the goals, actions and targets set out in this document.

We launched this strategy at our 50th anniversary in October 2023, following completion of the largest capital works program since the Opera House opened in 1973, including the acclaimed renewal of the Concert Hall and Joan Sutherland Theatre. Since then we have made good progress including:

- Expanded our programming and activities to welcome more of the community on site and online, including increasing engagement with young people and schools, and elevating First Nations voices and culture.
- Navigated the long tail of COVID-19 and more recent geopolitical instability and inflationary pressures to achieve a small sustainable surplus from 2026, with about 90% self-generated operating revenue and $10 million annually in philanthropy and partnerships revenue to support Everyone's House initiatives.
- Secured $120 million in new NSW Government funding in 2026 to replace end-of-life infrastructure and technology.
- Maintained 6 Star Green Star certification from the Green Building Council of Australia, representing global leadership in environmental and social sustainability, and joined the United Nations Global

Compact, the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative (throughout the document you'll see the UN Global Goals our work supports).

- Offered life-changing career development and employment opportunities through our Community Corporate cadetships (refugees/migrants), Workplace Readiness (people with disability) and First Nations trainee programs.

When we started to develop the Everyone's House strategy in 2023, it was a time of great uncertainty, with the community and cultural sector beginning to recover from the pandemic, the longer-term impacts of which were unclear. Three years (to the end of 2026) therefore seemed the appropriate strategy period.

Since then, however, two things have become clear – global uncertainty shows no sign of abating, and the ambition to be Everyone's House is a unifying pole star.

After a detailed review of our achievements to date, what remains to be done and emerging challenges and opportunities in the operating environment, we are confident that extending the strategy to the end of 2028 is the right thing to do. Priorities will include: enabling more outdoor activity, with a focus on free and low-cost events; engaging new and diverse artists and audiences; adapting and responding to the impacts of climate change and artificial intelligence.

The strategy also closely aligns with the priorities identified in Creative Communities, the NSW Government's 10-year arts, culture and creative industries policy launched at the end of 2023.

In bringing this strategy to life, we acknowledge the support of the whole Opera House community: staff, artists, audiences, resident companies, the NSW Government, donors, partners and the broader creative sector. Together and every day, we will continue working to make Everyone's House a reality.



2024 DanceRites, Photo by Daniel Boud.

The Sydney Opera House is a living work of art. A place of possibility and wonder – on and off the stage. We bring people together to be uplifted, empowered and entertained.

Our ambition is to be

Everyone's House

To make this real, we are focused on four themes:

We better understand and connect with the community

Everyone feels welcome here

We are future ready

We lead and inspire positive change

Photo by Simon Rae.

We better understand and connect with the community

2023 Dance Mania in the Centre for Creativity, Photo by Katje Ford.

We better understand and connect with the community

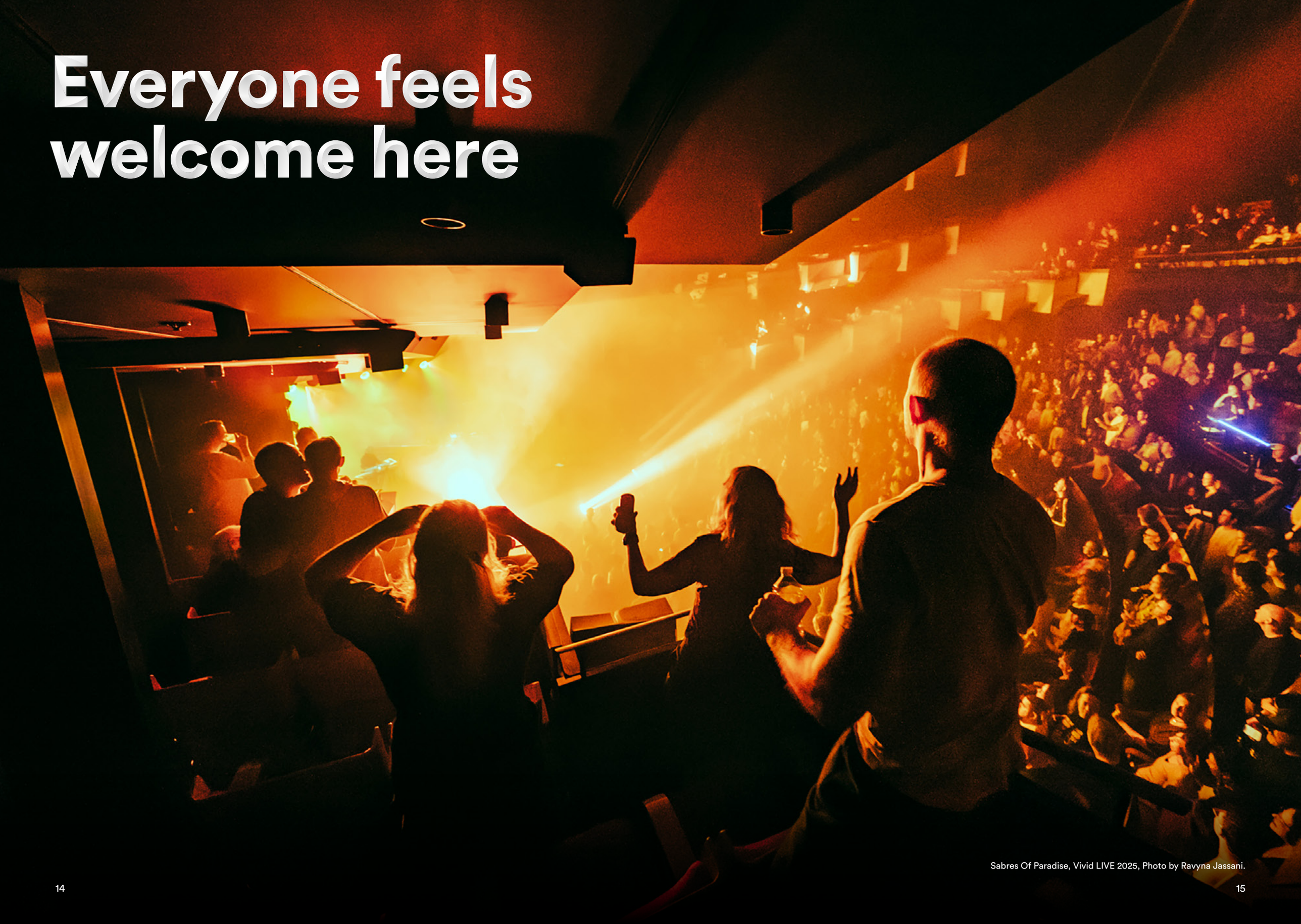
Goal	How we will get there
SOH's programming involves, inspires and attracts an increasingly diverse range of artists and communities – on site and online	• Broaden SOH's programming across contemporary and traditional art forms, positioning SOH as a vibrant centre of creativity. • Amplify the artistry, voices and ideas that define contemporary Australia by: – Engaging a greater diversity of artists, including First Nations artists, to develop and present new work. – Bringing together people with different lived experiences, including in curatorial roles, to shape, enrich and extend the work presented here. • Program leading international artists, major works and festival productions. • Use SOH as a catalyst for learning, embedding creativity through schools and community programs, deepening teacher relationships, and inspiring children through on-site, off-site and digital experiences. • Remove barriers so that more people visit and engage with SOH, including through: – Co-designed strategies that enable sustained community engagement and participation. – Subsidised tickets and travel, accessible performances and assistive technologies.

This work supports these UN Global Goals



Goal	How we will get there
Our tours, food and retail offerings play a key role in bringing the Opera House to life – telling its stories and enriching the experience for all visitors	• Attract more local, national and international tour patrons through broader storytelling and more accessible experiences. • Curate distinctive dining and retail experiences that showcase Australian produce, talent and design. • Leverage technology to create more engaging, equitable and interactive visitor experiences.
We are insight-led and better able to engage current and potential audiences and visitors	• Strengthen our capability to be more data-led with a focus on research and insights, including greater collaboration with resident companies and precinct partners. • Deepen our understanding of existing audiences and visitors, and identify gaps and opportunities to inform decision-making and investment across programming, experiences and marketing. • Coordinate program planning and marketing across presenting streams (SOH Presents, resident companies, hirers). • Build brand affinity through compelling storytelling about the breadth of what happens here. • Increase marketing effectiveness and improve the customer experience (CX) through better integration of campaigns, channels and technology. • Continue to invest in website development and other customer platforms.

Everyone feels welcome here



Sabres Of Paradise, Vivid LIVE 2025, Photo by Ravyna Jassani.

Everyone feels welcome here

Goal	How we will get there
SOH is a vibrant, welcoming, accessible and safe civic space – day and night	• Expand the use of outdoor and foyer spaces with free and low-cost performances, experiences, art, exhibitions and community-led events. • Improve planning and collaboration for temporary activations, so that they meet the required standards of creative excellence and heritage management. • Provide more welcoming and easy-to-navigate paths of travel for people arriving and leaving SOH, including improved accessibility, wayfinding and signage. • Improve inclusive spaces site-wide (e.g. parents room, all-gender bathrooms) to meet the diverse needs of the community. • Update SOH's Accessibility Masterplan to reflect current codes and evolving visitor expectations.

Goal	How we will get there
SOH is a culturally safe and nurturing environment for everyone – workers, artists, audiences and visitors	• Everyone who works at SOH understands and takes responsibility for cultural safety, inclusivity and anti-discrimination, supported by clear policies, education and training. • Strengthen inclusive language across the organisation and our public channels, including translation and interpretation, to foster a welcoming and supportive environment for all. • Celebrate diversity and increase connection through an ongoing program of staff events, activities and storytelling. • Embrace community diversity across visitor experiences, e.g. food and beverage, multi-language tours.

This work supports these UN Global Goals



We are future ready



2017 Vivid Sydney Lighting of the Sails, *Audio Creatures*. Photo by Daniel Boud.

We are future ready

Goal

Our workforce is skilled for the future, engaged, safe, supported and more diverse

How we will get there

- Together, we live our values and maintain a positive culture, so our people and organisation can thrive by:
  - Communicating effectively, respectfully and openly across all teams and levels.
  - Ensuring everyone feels valued for the role they play and connected to our purpose.
  - Holding ourselves, and everyone we work with, accountable to our workplace standards.
- Safety is our greatest responsibility, both physical and psychosocial. We:
  - Demonstrate strong safety leadership and ensure all SOH workers understand and take seriously their responsibilities.
  - Implement/maintain robust safety systems and governance, including proactive risk management and training.
- Strong leaders and managers:
  - Motivate teams to achieve our strategy through clear and consistent direction.
  - Model positive and inclusive behaviour.
  - Support their teams to navigate change and challenges and maximise opportunities.
- Workforce planning, learning and development activities are data-informed, anticipating and responding to the evolving skills that our people and organisation need.
- Sustained growth in workforce diversity, at all levels, with equitable career pathways and targeted leadership development.

Goal

SOH's infrastructure, technology and systems are continually adapting to meet future demands

How we will get there

- Work closely with the NSW Government to ensure sustained investment in the care, maintenance and evolution of the building.
- Scope, plan and deliver critical asset replacement works for the Northern Broadwalk, Western Foyer venues (Drama Theatre, Studio and Playhouse) and priority technology infrastructure projects.
- Leverage fit-for-purpose technology, including AI and other emerging platforms:
  - Anticipating and responding to opportunities, including creating more relevant, personalised and accessible audience/visitor experiences.
  - Improving operational effectiveness, including streamlining systems and processes.
  - Managing privacy, cyber and other security risks.
  - Ensuring this is done responsibly, ethically and with clear governance.
- Improve project planning, delivery and change management.
- Finalise a climate adaptation plan to anticipate and effectively manage impacts.

This work supports these UN Global Goals



We are future ready

Goal	How we will get there
We celebrate and conserve SOH's State, National and World Heritage significance – now and in the future	• Be responsible and capable custodians of this World Heritage site, guided by an effective heritage management and governance framework. • Communicate and deepen understanding about SOH's history and heritage. • Upskill staff and third parties so SOH's heritage is celebrated and respected in the way we work and present the site.
The organisation is financially sustainable, with the right business model to make Everyone's House real	• Build a balanced and diversified mix of income across: — Programming. — Precinct. — Philanthropy and partnerships. — Government. This, combined with focused cost management, will deliver a sustainable operating surplus to support organisational priorities and maximise SOH's cultural contribution and impact. • Increase social and environmental outcomes across SOH procurement.

Goal	How we will get there
We respond to the evolving needs of artists, presenting companies and hirers	• Adapt our processes to better support an increasingly diverse program of artists and presenting companies. • Ensure production and event delivery teams are appropriately resourced and skilled. • Enable more flexible use of SOH's site and venues, balancing artistic, community, financial, maintenance and training needs. • Expand SOH's support of the sector, including through commissioning new work and being the enabling venue for tours by local and international artists. • Prioritise up-to-date screen infrastructure, including Recording & Broadcasting Studio upgrades. • Collaborate with the arts and entertainment industries on education, training and career development initiatives.

This work supports these UN Global Goals



We lead and inspire positive change



THAW by Legs on the Wall, January 2022. Photo by Tracy Askew.

We lead and inspire positive change

Goal	How we will get there
First Nations voices, self-determination and storytelling play a vital role in shaping SOH and its future	• Strengthen First Nations representation throughout the organisation, including in leadership positions. • Develop a new First Nations strategy, led by First Nations staff with shared accountability for implementation, focused on: — First Nations storytelling and truth-telling. — Community, relationships and partnerships. — Self-determination, equity and respect. — Workforce planning and development.
SOH is at the heart of a more vibrant, creative and sustainable future for Sydney and beyond	• Build on SOH's successful strategic partnerships with government, industry and peer organisations to: — Champion initiatives that enhance Sydney's cultural vibrancy. — Attract local, interstate and international artists and visitors. — Increase access and participation in the arts. — Help promote the city as a sustainable destination. • Encourage best-practice sustainable event delivery, internally and with the broader industry.

Goal	How we will get there
We lead, collaborate and innovate to bring about social and environmental change	• Leverage our position and brand to drive action and amplify the role of arts, culture and the creative industries in addressing the UN Global Goals. • Better understand SOH's institutional influence, identifying where power sits in our programming and decision-making and exploring ways to enable shared cultural leadership. • Adapt and improve our building and operations to maintain world leadership in social and environmental performance (6 Star Green Star). • Decarbonise our operations and supply chain to achieve net zero for Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2040 and Scope 3 emissions by 2050. • Help regenerate and restore the environment around us and better understand our nature-related impacts and dependencies. • Continue to improve SOH's social and environmental governance, impact measurement and reporting.

This work supports these UN Global Goals



Everyone's House

The strategic themes, goals and targets driving our progress

We better understand and connect with the community

- SOH's programming involves, inspires and attracts an increasingly diverse range of artists and communities – on site and online
- Our tours, food and retail offerings play a key role in bringing the Opera House to life – telling its stories and enriching the experience for all visitors
- We are insight-led and better able to engage current and potential audiences and visitors

Everyone feels welcome here

- SOH is a vibrant, welcoming, accessible and safe civic space – day and night
- SOH is a culturally safe and nurturing environment for everyone – workers, artists, audiences and visitors

We are future ready

- Our workforce is skilled for the future, engaged, safe, supported and more diverse
- SOH's infrastructure, technology and systems are continually adapting to meet future demands
- We celebrate and conserve SOH's State, National and World Heritage significance – now and in the future
- The organisation is financially sustainable, with the right business model to make Everyone's House real
- We respond to the evolving needs of artists, presenting companies and hirers

We lead and inspire positive change

- First Nations voices, self-determination and storytelling play a vital role in shaping SOH and its future
- We lead, collaborate and innovate to bring about social and environmental change
- SOH is at the heart of a more vibrant, creative and sustainable future for Sydney and beyond

2028 targets*

10m
Precinct visitation exceeds 10m

1.4m
Total paid audience at shows exceeds 1.4m

40%
Attract 40% new audience to SOH (NSW only)

600k
Grow paid tours attendance to 600k

25
Present 25 outdoor events and activations, of which at least 5 are free and low-cost

1m
Engaged customer database reaches 1 million

+82
Improve the post-visit Net Promoter Score (NPS) to +82

Sydney Opera House Presents

30
Commission at least 30 new artistic works (2024 – 28)

100
Present 100 First Nations works (2024 – 28), including by international First Nations artists

5%
Continue to increase underrepresented, culturally and linguistically diverse programming score by 5% annually**

17m
Reach 17m engagements through digital programming and learning experiences

75%
Improve NSW Government People Matter Employee Survey staff engagement score to 75%

Provide 70 new employment opportunities for underrepresented communities through Career Pathways Program (2024 – 28)

Progress towards NSW Government workforce diversity targets***

Improve Sydneysider perceptions of SOH as welcoming (+10 percentage points) and offering a full spectrum of events (+6 percentage points) (2024 – 28)

90%
Achieve 90% self-generated operating revenue, including $10m in philanthropy and partnerships to enable Everyone's House

On track to be net zero by 2040 (scope 1 and 2) and 2050 (scope 3)

Maintain 90% waste diversion from landfill

Maintain 6 Star Green Star Performance certification

* All targets annual, unless stated
** FY25 uCALD score baseline
*** NSW Government targets: Women (50%), Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people (3.3%), people whose first language spoken as a child was not English (23.2%), people with disability (5.6%)

UN Global Goals

The United Nations has defined 17 goals to address the world's most pressing challenges by 2030. In 2019, the Sydney Opera House became the first major Australian arts institution to adopt the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals. In 2024, we joined the UN Global Compact.

We have made meaningful progress across several areas including First Nations reconciliation, equity and inclusion, accessibility and climate action. But there remains much to do.

The Opera House is a cultural icon and symbol of modern Australia, with a responsibility to lead and inspire positive change.

In line with our strategy to be Everyone's House, we have embedded social and environmental actions and measures into organisation-wide planning. We have also undertaken extensive consultation with stakeholders and communities, to strengthen engagement and embed lived experience into our approach. This has helped us to identify five priority SDGs where we can have the greatest impact, working with partners, artists, audiences and the broader cultural sector. Through our enabling practices, the Opera House also supports five additional goals.



Strategic Goal	Target	Our commitment
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	8.3, 8.5, 8.8, 8.9	Strengthen and showcase First Nations culture locally and globally. Be a catalyst for creativity, innovation and sustainable tourism. Champion wellbeing across our workforce.
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	10.2	Advance equity and inclusion by improving diversity, accessibility and participation on and off the stage.
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	11.4, 11.7	Create safe and accessible public spaces. Protect and celebrate cultural practices and natural heritage on Bennelong Point and beyond.
12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	12.5, 12.6, 12.7	Lead in responsible production and consumption by embedding circular economy principles, sustainable procurement and best practice building, operational and event delivery practices.
13 CLIMATE ACTION	13.1, 13.3	Strengthen resilience and take bold climate action.

Working towards a sustainable future for all

Thank you to the individuals, communities and organisations who contributed their time, expertise and perspectives to this strategy. This work is stronger because of your contribution, and we are grateful for your collaboration.

The challenges we face cannot be solved alone. We invite the whole community to join us in shaping a future that is more inclusive, equitable and sustainable for all.

Our Values



Encounter Sydney performing on the Monumental Steps, May 2022. Photo by Cassandra Hannagan.

Creativity

We are curious and ask questions.
We set out to inspire and be inspired.



Courage

We dare to think differently and
are ready to embrace change.



Inclusivity

We respect and welcome everyone.
People feel a sense of belonging here.



Integrity

We are honest, open and fair.



Collaboration

We value teamwork. We listen, learn and share.
Together, we celebrate success.



Care

We look after each other, this
place and the world around us.
Safety is our greatest responsibility.



Here's what our staff say:

What does Everyone's House mean to you?

I feel like I am at home.
I am happy and inspired.
I see me and can be me.



Staff feel engaged, proud and loyal. Artists want to work here.

The original intention was to be the people's house – this ambition has been consistent over time but how we realise it might change.







There is a sense of ownership and belonging from the community.



A place for everyone, a realisation that dreams are possible, this is what Everyone's House means to me.

Live Echo, part of Art on the Steps. Photo by Jordan Munns.

Nothing quite like it

The Sydney Opera House is a living work of art. A place of possibility and wonder – on and off the stage. We bring people together to be uplifted, empowered and entertained.

sydneyoperahouse.com

Front cover photo by Mikki Gomez.

NSW GOVERNMENT